Police Deny Keeping Files on Daley Foes

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CHICAGO, March 25—Police Supt. James D. Rochford denied today that his department kept hundreds of dossiers on political opponents of Mayor Richard J. Daley, but defended the department's practice of infiltrating various "potentially dangerous" civic groups.

Rochford, appointed by Daley last year, said newspaper charges last week that the department compiled dossiers on persons who at one time or another differed with Daley were "completely false."

Rochford specifially denied that the department kept files on the Rev. Theodore Hesburgh, president of Notre Dame University, Republican State's Attorney Bernard Carey, and columnist Mike Royko, author of "Boss," a critical biography of Daley. He conceded, however, that these names may have been mentioned in dossiers maintained on "only about 100" of Chicago's more than 3 million residents.

Carey has convened a grand jury to determine whether police have exceeded their statutory authority in their undercover work.

Rochford said his department "welcomed any official review, investigation or criticism" of its intelligence activities but denounced "trial by press."

Rochford credited his intelligence division with making Chicago "one of the few major cities which had not felt the wrath of terrorist attacks within the last few years." He said the intelligence information also led to a number of key arrests, prevented kidnapings and several potential major disturbances.

Conceding that some intelligence is the result of gossip, hearsay and rumor, Rochford insisted all files have been kept "confidential." However, several of the civic groups that were infiltrated contend the information was freely exchanged with the FBI and CIA.